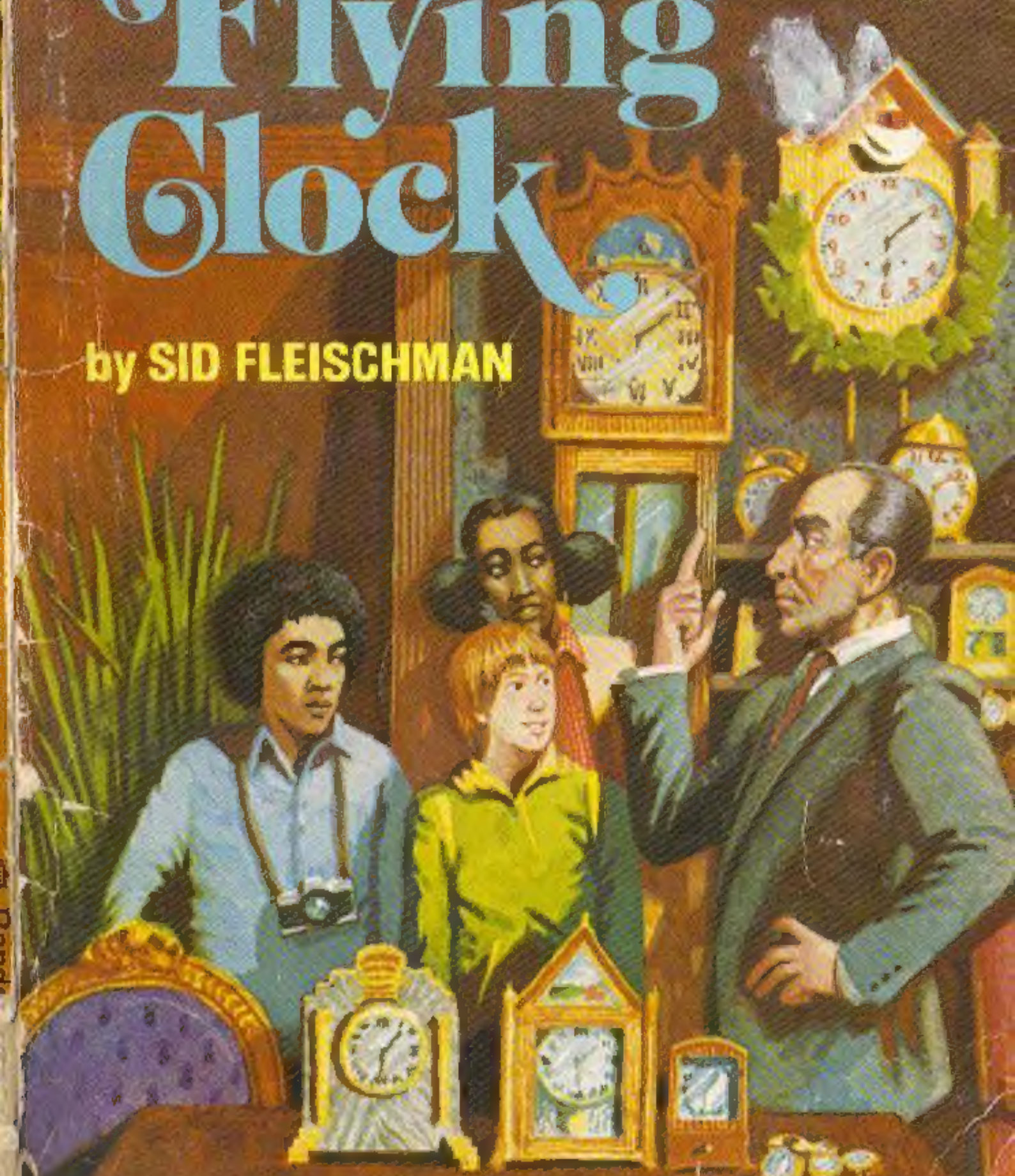


THE BLOODHOUND GANG IN

The Case of the

# Flying Clock

by SID FLEISCHMAN



illustrated by William Harmuth



# The Case of the FLYING CLOCK

Mr. Otis Ambleside Keefe wants action! Someone has stolen his rare flying clock. But when the insurance company puts the Bloodhound Gang on the case, Mr. Keefe is very upset. "They send street urchins to investigate a crime?" he asks.

Mr. Keefe has many more insults for them. He also has some important clues. The Bloodhound Gang gets right to work—and shows him just what three young sleuths can do!

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*The Bloodhound Gang in*

**The Case of the  
FLYING  
CLOCK**

by Sid Fleischman

*illustrated by William Harmuth*

Random House 

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*Children's Television Workshop*

*The Case of the Flying Clock* is based on a series created by Sid Fleischman for the Children's Television Workshop.

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\* 1 \*

# The Egg Trick

Tuesday.

On the office wall of the Bloodhound Detective Agency hung a bulletin board. Pinned among the messages, notes, and wanted posters was a hand-lettered announcement.

Command Performance

\*

THE GREAT RICARDO  
Crime Photographer and Magician  
will perform the world famous  
EGG TRICK

\*

10 a.m. tomorrow  
(DON'T BE LATE)

The clock on the wall read 10:18. Vikki was there. Zach was there. But the Great Ricardo was missing.

Vikki glanced up from the report she was typing for Mr. Bloodhound. "Maybe Ricardo's magic went haywire and he made himself disappear."

"No such luck," said Zach, who was ten, and the youngest member of the Bloodhound Gang. "He's always bugging me for being late."

At 10:24 Ricardo, the third member of the Bloodhound Gang, strolled idly into the office. He was carrying a small grocery sack.

"Ta-dah!" Vikki sang out.

"Look who's late," Zach said.

"For what?" asked Ricardo.

"Your so-called world-famous egg trick."

Ricardo glanced at the announcement on the bulletin board. "Some detectives! You didn't read it very carefully."

"Every word," Vikki said.

"You missed the clue." Ricardo grinned.  
"It says ten A.M. *tomorrow*. Right?"

"And that's today," said Zach.

"How can today be tomorrow? I'm a day *early*."

"But you put up the sign yesterday," said Zach.

Vikki, who was sixteen, a year older than Ricardo, finished off the report and ripped the last page out of the typewriter. "I have an idea. Why don't you do your egg trick yesterday? That way we won't have to watch it at all."

"You talked me into it," Ricardo muttered, and handed the grocery sack to Vikki. "There's an egg in there. Examine it while the Great Ricardo retires to his dressing room."

Ricardo slipped into the photographic darkroom and returned a moment later with a glass and pitcher, both full of water. He set them on a desk.

"The egg, please," he said.



Vikki handed it to him.

Ricardo held the egg over the glass. "A common egg, right? You examined it. Notice what happens when I drop it into a glass of water."

Ricardo let go of the egg. It sank through the water to the bottom of the glass.

"Some trick," Zach muttered scornfully.

Ricardo held up a hand. "But wait! The Great Ricardo, in person, will hypnotize the egg."

Ricardo recovered the egg by pouring the water into one of the office plants. The egg in one hand, he made mystic passes with the other.

"I command you to do as I say. Float. I command you to float. Got that, egg? Float!"

He refilled the glass from the pitcher and flicked a glance at his audience.

"Now watch—and behold!"

Carefully, Ricardo dropped the egg into the glass. It sank almost to the bottom, and then began to rise.



“It floats!” he declared triumphantly.  
“Egg-straordinary, eh?”

Vikki groaned at the pun. “I can barely stand the egg-citement.”

Zach peered at the egg bobbing on the surface of the water. “Hey! How’d you do that?”

His question was almost drowned out by the sudden ringing of the office phone. Vikki snapped up the receiver.

“Bloodhound Detective Agency,” she said. “Whenever there’s trouble, we’re there on the double. Mr. Bloodhound isn’t here. Victoria Allen speaking.”

Almost at once she began scribbling as she listened.

“Got it . . . got it, Mr. Z. What was that name again? Keefe. Otis Ambleside Keefe. Got it, Mr. Z. We’ll get right on it.”

She stood up and reached for the keys to lock the office.

“Ricardo, grab your camera.”

“What’s up?” Zach asked.

Vikki jammed the note in her pocket. "That was the president of the Triple Z Insurance Company. Something about a flying clock."

"With wings? That I'd like to see," Ricardo declared.

Vikki headed for the door. "Worth a fortune—and insured to the hilt."

"Stolen?" asked Ricardo.

"I thought you would never ask," Vikki replied.



\* 2 \*

## The Room Full of Clocks

The one-story house seemed crouched in the summer shade of immense maple trees. It looked out on the river. At the door the Bloodhound Gang faced Mr. Otis Amble-side Keefe.

He was a tall dapper man in his sixties. His eyes were pale as skinned green grapes.

"And who," he asked, lifting a baffled eyebrow, "are you?"

"Bloodhound Detective Agency," Vikki answered, handing over a business card. "Triple Z Insurance instructed us to look into the burglary you reported."

"They send street urchins and ragamuffins to investigate a crime of this magnitude? Apparently the insurance company doesn't take this matter seriously."

"Very seriously," Vikki snapped back.

"I'm glad to hear that." Mr. Keefe looked at the card, and a smile flickered across his face. "Good. Very good. Splendid. Come in." And then he added, "Do wipe the mud off your shoes."

"We have," Ricardo answered. There had been a heavy cloudburst the night before.

As they entered, Zach whispered to Vikki, "What's this street urchin and ragamuffin stuff?"

"He means us. Unwashed kids."

"I washed. Even combed my hair."

"But you didn't shine your shoes," Vikki muttered out of the side of her mouth.

"Sneakers?"

Mr. Keefe let out a great sigh. "The flying clock is my greatest treasure! You must find the man who stole it!"

"How do you know it was a man, sir?" Ricardo asked.

"I saw him. A man with red hair. Come this way."

Mr. Keefe led the Bloodhound Gang along a carpeted hall lined with suits of armor. In need of dusting, Vikki noticed. Cut flowers were wilted in their vases and hung like seaweed.

Vikki's glances did not escape Mr. Keefe. "You will excuse the neglect around here," he said, striding along with a clipped, military bearing. "I had to let my housekeeper go two weeks ago."

"Why was that?" Vikki asked.

"Clumsy. Dear Mrs. Finch kept breaking things. And I must add, small items seemed to disappear. Trifles. Not that I'm accusing her of the great crime."

"Did she have red hair?" Ricardo asked.

"As a matter of fact, she did. But don't waste your time on Mrs. Finch. As I told you, I saw the thief. A man. Definitely a man."

Finally, Mr. Keefe turned into a large, sunny room full of clocks. With a proud sweep of his arm he said, "My horological collection."

"Horological?" Zach asked.

Mr. Keefe raised an eyebrow and fixed Zach with a look of sharp impatience. "Of or pertaining to clocks and watches, as Noah Webster would put it. Don't they teach you youngsters anything in school?"

What a pompous old know-it-all, Vikki thought, and turned her attention to the room.

Antique clocks hung from all the walls. Glass cabinets were filled with pocket watches. Tall grandfather clocks stood like guardhouses. They ticked and clacked and bonged, all talking at once, filling the room with a mechanical chatter.

A young police officer, note pad in hand, came forward. "I'm Officer Dobbs," she said, and turned to Mr. Keefe. "Only one clock was stolen?"

"Vanished without a trace. A flying clock.





The rarest clock in my collection. Worth all these time tatters put together."

"What exactly is a flying clock?" Vikki asked.

Mr. Keefe arched an eyebrow again. "Flying *pendulum* clock, miss. Common knowledge, certainly."

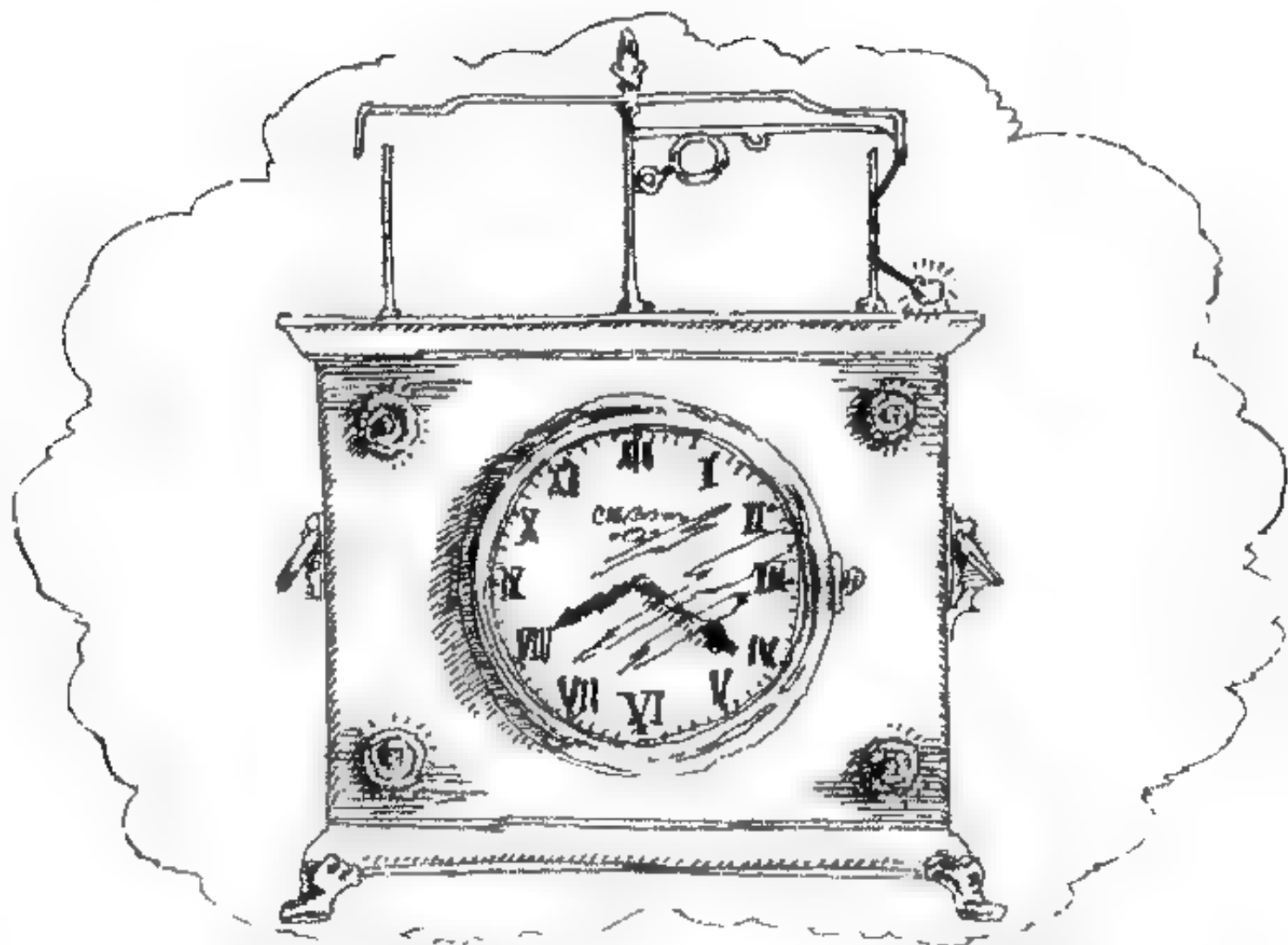
"Not to me," replied Officer Dobbs, glancing sympathetically at Vikki.

Mr. Keefe held up his index finger and began rotating it as if he were spinning a chain on it.

"The pendulum, a genuine ruby on a fine gold chain, reaches out like an elegant whip and winds itself around a pillar. It unwinds and flies to a pillar on the other side of the clock. Back and forth. Flying and spinning. Endlessly fascinating to watch. Have I made myself clear?"

Officer Dobbs made a brief note on her pad. "Barely."

"But this is not your run-of-the-mill flying pendulum clock!" Mr. Keefe added.



“Encrusted with gold and jewels. And it has a pedigree, you might say. Better jot it down. Once belonged to Louis.”

“Louis?” Officer Dobbs asked.

Mr. Keefe sighed with forbearance at the ignorance of his visitors. “Louis the Sixteenth. Of France. He was a king.”

“Beheaded, 1793,” Vikki said, unable to resist a bit of one-upmanship.

Mr. Keefe shot her a pale-eyed glance.

Vikki was glad she remembered the date.

"French Revolution," she remarked. "It's taught in school."

Officer Dobbs seemed anxious to be finished with the interview. "Insured, Mr. Keefe?"

"Louis? Unlikely."

"The clock, sir."

"Naturally, Officer."

"For one hundred and fifty thousand dollars," Vikki said. "Mr. Keefe has already put in an insurance claim."

"Rather foolish of me," remarked Mr. Keefe.

Officer Dobbs looked up. "Insuring it?"

"For so little! Easily worth half a million."

"Pity," said the police officer absently, thumbing back through her notes. "Do you mind going over the details again? You may have forgotten something. You said the clock was stolen last night. Correct?"

"Correct, Officer."

"Early? Late?"

"Late last night. During that sudden



rainstorm. I told you, didn't I? I got a glimpse of the miscreant."

Zach and Ricardo were standing beside a collection of sand clocks.

"What's a miscreant?" Zach whispered.

"He must mean the burglar."

"Why didn't he say so?"

Zach had idly turned over a sand clock that had run itself out.

"Hands off, you two!" bellowed Mr. Otis Ambleside Keefe.

Ricardo and Zach looked up and froze under the old man's icy glare.

"Yes—"

"—sir."

Vikki had begun to make notes herself. "The miscreant . . . You were saying, Mr. Keefe?"

"He had wild red hair. I saw him."

"How did you happen to see him?" asked Officer Dobbs.

"Follow me. I'll show you."

\* 3 \*

## The Man with Red Hair

Mr. Keefe pointed to an open window at the far end of his bedroom.

"I direct your attention to the window. You'll notice that it stands open. That's how the rascal got in. And out."

Zach advanced to the window and whipped out his magnifying glass.

"You saw the burglar," Ricardo put in. "How clearly, sir?"

"Quite clearly." Mr. Keefe threw open the bathroom door. "I now direct your attention to my dressing mirror."

Vikki let out a small, weary breath. He

talks like a museum guide, she thought. She looked past him at the large bathroom with its marble tub, shower, and directly opposite the doorway, the full-length dressing mirror.

"Check," she said.

"And what do you see through the open doorway?" asked Mr. Keefe. "Yourselves, right?"

"In the mirror," Officer Dobbs nodded.

"As I told you earlier, that's how I saw the red-headed man."

The police officer consulted her notes. "In the shower."

"No, Officer. *I* was taking a shower. Or rather, I was *about* to take a steaming hot shower . . ."

"When the phone rang."

"Exactly. In my haste I left the shower running, slammed the door, and dashed to the bedroom phone. A rather long conversation with another horologist—er, clock freak as I suppose you younger people would put it."





"This was during the storm last night?" Vikki asked.

Mr. Keefe nodded. "Raining hard enough to drown fish. When I hung up the phone, I saw that the window was wide open. I didn't realize it at the time, but the red-headed rascal had already entered the house." He paused to let the effect sink in. "Gives one the shivers, wouldn't you agree?"

"Do you recall what you did next?" Vikki put in.

"Precisely. I shut the window."

"Then what?"

"I returned to the bathroom. I was hardly through the door when I saw a figure behind me in the mirror. He was carrying the flying pendulum clock. I froze on the spot—naturally. But I rather pride myself on my powers of observation. I kept my eyes on the mirror and fixed him in my memory."

"Red hair, for starters," Ricardo said.



“Tall as a stilt-walker. Skinny face, hollow cheeks, a front tooth chipped. And he wore sunglasses, if you can imagine.”

“Could it have been your housekeeper in disguise?” Ricardo asked.

“Impossible. Mrs. Finch is a mere hummingbird of a woman.”

Ricardo said, “Maybe she was on stilts.”

"Nonsense. I would have recognized her voice."

"The burglar spoke to you?" Officer Dobbs asked.

"Spoke is hardly the word to describe it. Roared and growled like a grizzly bear. My hair quite literally stood on end. '*Shut yourself in,*' he said. '*And don't come out!*'"

Officer Dobbs closed her notebook. "Why didn't you notify us before now? That was last night."

"Sheer cowardice, I'm forced to admit. It seemed hours before I could no longer hear the hoodlum tramping about the house. When I finally let myself out of the bathroom, I was in such a terrible state I had to take to my bed. The next thing I knew it was morning."

"Any other clocks missing?" Vikki asked.

"To my surprise—no."

"If he knew which was the most valuable in your collection, we must be dealing with a-an horologist."

Mr. Keefe gazed at Vikki with an air of faint scorn. "Unthinkable," he said. "Young lady, we horologists are not mere hobbyists. We are gentlemen."

"I'll make a note of it," Vikki replied.

Officer Dobbs started out. "Cheeks, hollow. Hair, red. Front tooth, chipped. He may turn up in a mug shot. The department will get back to you."

"Splendid. And I must rush off as well. Good-bye, Officer Dobbs."

The police officer left, but Zach was examining the bedroom carpet and Vikki was looking through the window at the grounds to the rear of the house.

"Anything else?" asked Mr. Keefe. "I'm already quite late for an appointment."

"I'd like to look around out back," Vikki replied.

Mr. Keefe's eyes swept the Bloodhound Gang. He bristled. "See here. I won't have you tracking mud in and out. And I'm in a hurry."

Vikki dismissed his objection as a trifle. "We won't keep you, sir. Just lock up after us."

She led the Bloodhound Gang into the hall.

"Use the servants' entrance," said Mr. Otis Ambleside Keefe. And he pointed the way to the door.

\* 4 \*

## The Missing Footprints

The Bloodhound Gang filed out through the servants' entrance at the rear of the house. Mr. Keefe locked the door behind the detectives.

Ricardo looked back indignantly. "He may be a gentleman, but what a creep." Then he added, "What do you think about the housekeeper in disguise? She'd probably have known all about the clock. She could have done it."

Vikki was already surveying the muddy grounds, the flower garden, and a dirt path

leading to a wishing well. She shook her head. "Mrs. Finch wouldn't have had to use the window."

"Why not?"

"House key. If she'd planned this, she'd have had a duplicate made. That simple. I think we can scratch her off as a suspect." Then Vikki pointed. "How about that? His own private wishing well."

"And I bet he wishes we'd fall in," Ricardo exclaimed.

Zach was tugging at Vikki's sleeve. "There's something wrong."

"That's news?" Vikki asked.

"I mean, I couldn't find any footprints."

"Where?"

"Inside, near the window," Zach answered. "If the miscre—the burglar entered that way, you'd think there'd be footprints on the carpet."

Vikki paused, absorbing the information. "Muddy ones."

"Right. It was raining, wasn't it?"



“At the moment, that’s all we can be sure of. Good sleuthing, Zach.”

“The red-headed guy could have taken off his shoes so as not to leave clues all over the house,” Ricardo said.

“Then there’d still be footprints in the mud *outside* the window,” Vikki replied. “Let’s check it out.”

Ricardo, attracted by the wishing well, sauntered off. “I’ll do some bloodhounding over there.”

Vikki smiled. “Make a wish for us. We need all the help we can get on this case. Come on, Zach.”

There were no footprints in the mud outside the bedroom window.

Zach looked up at Vikki. “So much for Mr. Keefe’s powers of observation. He forgot to notice that man with the chipped tooth had *wings*.”

Vikki stood motionless, deep in thought. Then she roused herself. “He didn’t actually say he *saw* the thief climb out the window.

Circumstantial evidence. Open window. Jumped to conclusions."

"Do you believe that, Vikki?"

Vikki smiled. "No. I like your birdman theory better."

And then she added, "If the burglar didn't use the window, but a door, Ricky may be right about the housekeeper. I guess she's a suspect, after all."

The screech of an iron gate drew their attention to the other side of the house. A beanpole of a delivery man, wearing sunglasses, was pushing two large sacks loaded on a dolly.

"Hey," he called out. "Is the servants' entrance back here?"

Vikki pointed. "Right in there. But it's locked."

Zach poked her with his elbow. "He kind of fits the description. Except he doesn't have red hair."

"The burglar could have been wearing a wig."

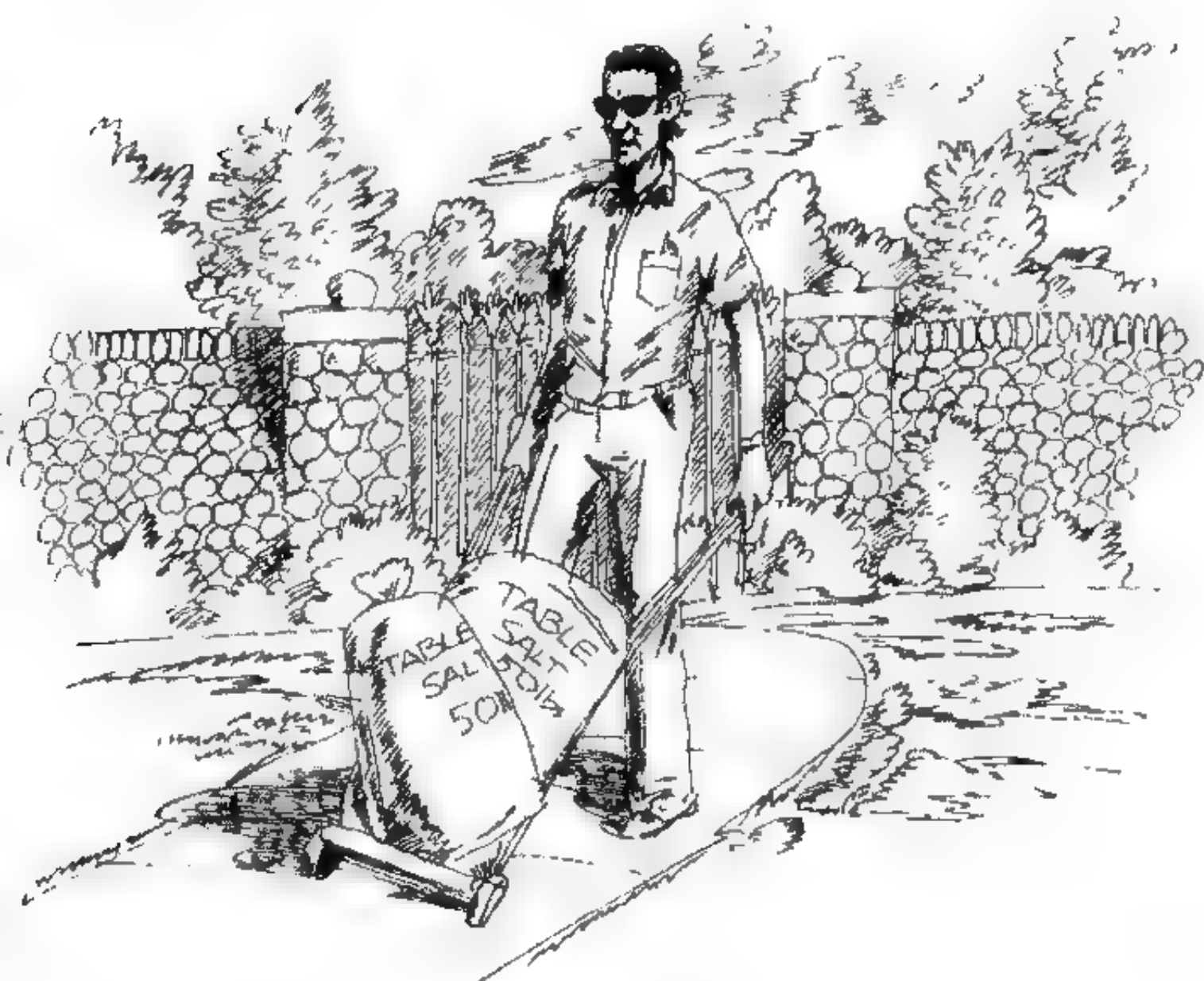
“Maybe.”

“I wonder if he has a chipped front tooth. Let’s check him out.”

Vikki and Zach approached the delivery man, who began unloading the sacks. “What are you going to do with all this salt?” the man asked.

“Salt?” Vikki said.

The delivery man stopped. “This is the Keefe residence, isn’t it?”



Vikki nodded. "But we don't live here." In a glance she read the printing on each sack.

TABLE SALT  
*50 Pounds*

"This was ordered for next week," remarked the delivery man. "But I had to be out this way, so I saved a trip." He smiled, flashing perfect teeth. "Tell the gent no extra charge for early delivery." The man went back out the gate, dragging the empty dolly.

"So much for the chipped-tooth theory," Zach said.

Vikki was peering at the two sacks stacked at the servants' entrance. "One hundred pounds of table salt. So much? I wonder what Mr. Keefe is using it for."

Ricardo called out from the wishing well. "Have a look at this!"

Vikki and Zach hurried over.

"Hey! Stay off the path!" Ricardo yelled.

When the Bloodhound Gang gathered at the wishing well, Vikki said, "What'd you find?"

"Footprints. In the mud. They come from the house, along the path, and to the wishing well. See for yourself."

"I see, I see," Vikki replied. "And that means they're fresh. Made after the storm rolled in."

Ricardo was on his knees, focusing his camera for a close-up of a clear, deep footprint. "Maybe the burglar was just steamed at Mr. Keefe, and dumped his crazy old clock down the well."

"I wonder if a skinny man would leave such deep prints," Vikki mused aloud.

Zach had already wandered off along the path. "You guys, the tracks go right back to the house. To the servants' entrance."

Vikki stood as motionless as a bird on point. Then she came alive. "I'll meet you two back at the office."

"What's the rush?" Ricardo asked.

"I want to go home and take a clue."

"A what?"

"I mean a shower." Her mind was spinning with ideas. "That could be the big clue, if you're right, Ricky. A clue none of us can see."

"If I'm right?" Ricardo exclaimed. "What did I say?"

"Steamed. If the burglar was steamed. Ricky, I don't know what I'd do without you."

"Hey . . ."

But Vikki was already rushing off. She paused to toss back a wave.

"And don't track mud in the office."

\* 5 \*

## The Clue in the Mirror

Freshly showered, Vikki moved to the kitchen and phoned the office. After a single ring Ricardo's voice came on the line.

"Bloodhound Detective Agency," he said. "Whenever there's trouble, we're there on the double. Mr. Bloodhound isn't here. Ricardo Lopez speaking."

"Hi. And guess what?"

"Okay, I'll bite, Vikki. What?"

"The thief didn't have red hair."

"You think Mr. Keefe is color-blind?"

"Call Officer Dobbs. Ask her to meet us back at Keefe's place. He's home. I just



checked. I'll go directly from here."

There was a note of caution in Ricardo's voice. "Sure you know what you're doing?"

"Positive. It's all in the mirror. I'll show you later. 'Bye."

It was shortly after lunch when Vikki rejoined the others and led the way to Mr. Keefe's bedroom. Officer Dobbs had brought along a thick mug book containing picture after picture of criminals for Mr. Keefe to look through. But Vikki waved it aside.

"We won't be needing that."

"On the contrary, young lady," Mr. Keefe said haughtily. "The housebreaker is bound to have a police record. I'm looking forward to pointing him out."

Vikki ignored him, stepped into the bathroom, and turned on the shower. She let the water run, closed the door, and rejoined the others.

"What's the meaning of all this hanky-

panky?" Mr. Keefe haughtily exclaimed.

"Let's step over to the window," Vikki said. "Ricardo, we'll want pictures of the carpet area and the window sill."

Mr. Keefe folded his arms. "I will not be ordered about in my own house."

"No one is ordering you," Officer Dobbs remarked in a calm, reassuring voice. "Consider it an interesting suggestion. The Bloodhound Detective Agency has a good reputation with the police department. Let's see what Miss Allen has in mind."

Mr. Keefe grumbled for a moment, and then unfolded his arms. "Naturally I want to cooperate with the police. Fully."

He tagged along to the bedroom window where Ricardo was already shooting pictures. Vikki glanced quickly at Mr. Keefe.

"You said the burglar came in through this window. Right, sir?"

"Exactly."

"Impossible," said Vikki.

Bristling, Mr. Keefe raised an eyebrow.

"Don't be impertinent. I discovered the window wide open."

"But we can't find any footprints."

"Footprints," Mr. Keefe scoffed. "My dear young lady, the mere act of walking does not produce footprints."

Vikki gave a quick nod. "But you said the burglar entered during the rainstorm last night. His shoes would have been muddy. And that's what Ricardo is photographing—the footprints that aren't there."

Mr. Keefe shrugged. "I assure you, had there been footprints, my housekeeper would have vacuumed them up."

Vikki ran a finger along the window sill and rubbed the dust between her thumb and fingers. She remembered the saying that a liar must have a good memory.

"You're forgetting, Mr. Keefe. You told us you fired your housekeeper."

Officer Dobbs nodded. "Would you like me to read back my notes to you, sir?"

"Now see here!" Mr. Keefe raked the

group with laser-beam green eyes. "Your duties, may I remind you, are to track down a thief—not to persecute me with these insulting questions. I've been burglarized. The scapegrace is at large. Catch him."

"Scapegrace?" Zach whispered to Ricardo. "He sure knows a lot of fancy words for a plain ol' crook."

Vikki faced Mr. Otis Ambleside Keefe squarely. "Red hair? Sunglasses? A chipped front tooth? Are you certain of that?"

"Not merely certain. Positive! I pride myself on my powers . . ."

". . . of observation," Officer Dobbs finished for him. "I have that in my notes."

Vikki took a deep breath. "You said you turned on the shower when the phone rang."

"Exactly."

"After a long conversation, you hung up the phone and returned to the shower. Correct, sir?"

"Perfectly."



“And that’s when you saw the burglar. Reflected in the mirror.”

“Precisely.”

Vikki walked back to the bathroom door. The others followed. “I tried out the shower and mirror at home.”

“How enterprising of you,” said Mr. Keefe darkly.

Vikki found herself having to gulp down a flutter of nervousness. “Sir. You didn’t see the burglar.”

“I’ve had quite enough of this!”

Vikki threw open the bathroom door. She raised her voice against the roar of the shower. “Look for yourself. At the mirror.”

All eyes darted through the steamy room to the dressing mirror.

Vikki said, “The mirror, Mr. Keefe, is fogged white. Steamed up. No reflection at all. Sir, you couldn’t have seen anyone. And *certainly* not a detail like a chipped tooth. The red-haired man in sunglasses doesn’t exist. You made him up.”

\* 6 \*

## The Mysterious Sacks of Salt

Ricardo dug the flash attachment out of his camera bag and began shooting pictures of the fogged mirror.

He barely listened to Mr. Keefe's protests. He was remembering sitting in science class one day. A brand-new teacher, Miss Sward, was explaining that warm air can hold more moisture than cold. It seemed a weird fact, then. Now, before his eyes, he saw the fact in action. Hot steam hits cold mirror. Air cools, can't hold all the water. Wham! Steam condenses as droplets of



water. Zip! Water sticks to glass surface. Zap! Foggy mirror. It surprised him that this stray bit of science would figure in one of the Bloodhound Gang cases.

"An imaginary prowler?" Mr. Keefe was saying, trying to appear unruffled. "A quaint theory. I must have forgotten to turn on the hot water."

"What you forgot, sir," said Vikki, "is to tell us you weren't in the shower at all. You were out in the rain."

Mr. Keefe appeared stung. "What on earth for!"

"To hide the flying pendulum clock."

"What arrogant nonsense. Carry that superb clock out in the rain? It would be ruined!"

"Oh, I'm sure you waterproofed it somehow," said Vikki.

"Why would I waterproof it, may I ask?"

"To cheat our client, the Triple Z Insurance Company, out of a huge amount of insurance money."

A smirk settled across Mr. Keefe's face. "And just where am I supposed to have hidden the flying pendulum clock?"

Vikki paused a minute. She was on uncertain ground. Finally, she took the risk. "The last place anyone would think to search for it. In the wishing well out back."

Officer Dobbs had heard enough. "We'd better have a look."

"Another quaint theory," said Mr. Keefe with a disdainful snort.

As Officer Dobbs led the way out the servants' entrance to the backyard, Ricardo stopped short. The two fifty-pound sacks of salt were still in place. Mr. Keefe, noticing them there, seemed almost to jump out of his shoes. He recovered quickly and continued on.

Ricardo gave Zach's sleeve a tug.

"Did you see that?"

"See what, Ricky?"

"The way he looked at the salt. His eyes

practically popped out of his head."

At the wishing well Vikki was already pointing to the tracks drying in the mud.

"These are the missing footprints."

"I *told* you there was an intruder!" exclaimed Mr. Keefe, with a sudden smile.

"The prints lead from the house to the wishing well. Kerplunk goes the clock! The feet turn around and head back to the house."

"Dropped in the well?" remarked Mr. Keefe. "Something so delicate and valuable? Unthinkable! Even for the most ignorant sneak thief. Don't you agree, Officer Dobbs?"

"It hardly seems likely," the police officer assented, looking down into the murky water of the well.

Ricardo cleared his throat. "Mr. Keefe, do you know how to make an egg float?"

"What?"

"An egg float in a glass of water."

"Yes, yes. That old parlor trick," said Mr.



Keefe, brushing Ricardo aside with a gesture of his hand. He turned to Officer Dobbs. "So we have definitely established an intruder, have we not?"

"Not if these footprints are yours," said Vikki.

"*Mine?*"

Behind Mr. Keefe's back, Ricardo was trying to flag Vikki's attention. But her eyes were riveted on her suspect.

"It's easy to check, sir. All you have to do to prove me wrong is try your foot in one of the prints. For size."

"Of course they're mine! This is my



backyard. It should hardly be unexpected to find my footprints in it."

"But these were made during the hours you said you had shut yourself in the bathroom."

Mr. Kccfc was caught speechless.

Officer Dobbs gave him a hard look. "Your story seems to have more holes than a leaky roof. We'll see if we can fish the clock out of the well. I'll call the department for a grappling hook."

"That could damage the clock," Vikki put in quickly, thinking of the Bloodhound Gang's client, Triple Z Insurance.

"And quite naturally, I forbid it," declared Mr. Kccfc, regaining his composure. "Not that I believe for a moment the clock is down there."

"I do," said Officer Dobbs. "And I'm taking you down to the station for questioning."

Ricardo finally succeeded in catching Vikki's attention and drawing her aside.

"Remember the egg trick I did in the office?" he said softly.

"Yes."

"Well, he knows the trick. And he ordered all that salt."

"I don't see the connection, Ricky."

"Salt is the secret. If you put an egg in fresh water, it sinks. But if you add a lot of salt, the water becomes denser and the egg floats. Rises to the top."

"Rises to the top?" A smile burst over Vikki's face. "I read you. Good going, Ricky!"

Then she turned to the police officer. "You won't need a grappling hook, Officer. We ought to be able to recover the clock the same way Mr. Keefe planned to. After the coast was clear. With salt."

"Salt?" remarked the police officer doubtfully.

Vikki pointed toward the servants' entrance. "Those two sacks sitting over there. Delivered early. I don't think Mr. Keefe



ordered a hundred pounds of the stuff to salt his eggs." Then she added, "Okay if we try Ricardo's idea?"

"If it'll save the police time and expense, go ahead," replied the police officer.

\* 7 \*

# The Clock Trick

Ricardo and Zach dragged the fifty-pound sacks to the well.

“The whole notion is preposterous,” said Mr. Keefe. “I shall, of course, get in touch with my lawyers.”

Vikki couldn’t help feeling a touch of apprehension. What if the clock was not in the well? What if the salt trick didn’t work?

Ricardo and Zach poured first one sack into the water, then the other.

The five people watched and waited.

Nothing rose to the surface.



"I think this is an outrage," Mr. Keefe sputtered. "And I intend to sue these Bloodhound detectives for slander, defamation of character—and polluting my wishing well."

Ricardo peered into the murky water. "The salt needs more time to dissolve. It



would help if we had something long enough to stir with.”

“Got it,” Zach said, and scampered off to a pile of tree trimmings at the rear of the property. He returned moments later carrying a straight branch with a head of leaves. It looked like a long feather duster.

He dipped it deeply into the well and stirred.

The water began to turn milky.

The Bloodhound Gang held its breath.

"Do you see anything?" Vikki whispered.

Ricardo felt nervous. "Nothing yet." If it worked with an egg, why not the clock? Was it too heavy?

"Enough of this foolishness!" Mr. Keefe declared.

"Hold it. . . ." Ricardo breathed.

He'd caught a golden glint in the salty depths.

"I see it," Vikki murmured.

Something was rising. And then up it popped—a golden and bejeweled clock inside a clear, partly inflated bag.

Vikki gazed at the antique with a touch of awe. "King Louis' flying pendulum clock—if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Keefe."

Otis Ambleside Keefe, his face gone white, stood as motionless as a pillar of salt.

Ricardo threw a leg over the edge of the

wishing well and reached down to retrieve the floating timepiece. He lifted it out to safety.

"What do you know . . . sealed up in a waterproof camera bag. There's air in it, too. Must be just enough air to let the clock sink in regular water, but enough to float it to the top in salt water."

"A neat balancing act," Vikki said. "But not neat enough to swindle the Triple Z Insurance Company."



"I'm placing Mr. Keefe under arrest," said Officer Dobbs, getting out her handcuffs. "I'll take the clock along as evidence." And then she added, "Brilliant."

With a touch of arrogance, Mr. Keefe broke his silence. "Brilliant. Yes, yes. Thank you."

"Not you, Mr. Keefe," the police officer said. "Them. The Bloodhound Gang."

When Vikki, Ricardo, and Zach returned to the office, Mr. Bloodhound had been in and out.

"Look," said Zach. "He left a note on the bulletin board."

The Bloodhound Gang gathered to read it.

ECCHHH! SOME CREEP SALTED THE WATER  
PITCHER. MY THROAT FEELS LIKE I'VE  
BEEN EATING SANDPAPER AND PICKLED  
HERRING. WHODUNIT? INVESTIGATE CASE  
AND BRING CULPRIT TO JUSTICE.

BLOODHOUND



Zach looked at Ricardo. "You and your egg trick," he laughed. "Looks like you're in for it."

Ricardo slunk away from the bulletin board. "Vikki, think you could leave the Great Ricardo out of your report?"

"Nope."

"Aw, come on, Vikki. He might fire me."



"Or give you a raise. The Great Ricardo's world-famous egg trick led directly to the flying pendulum clock trick."

Vikki picked up a broad-tipped felt pen and wrote across Mr. Bloodhound's message:

DEAR MR. B.,

CASE SOLVED. IN FUTURE

PLEASE DO NOT DRINK OUR CLUES.

THE BLOODHOUND GANG

*Sid Fleischman*, well-known for his adventurous, humorous stories and his very lively characters, is the author of over two dozen books for children. Born in New York, he grew up in San Diego. He has been a professional magician\* and a newspaper reporter.

He is the recipient of many awards, including the Golden Kite Award, the Mark Twain Award, and the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award. *Jingo Django* (1971) was an ALA Notable Book. Today Mr. Fleischman writes motion-picture and television scripts including the *Bloodhound Gang* mysteries he created for *3-2-1 Contact*, the science series produced by Children's Television Workshop.

Sid Fleischman lives in Santa Monica, a beach town near Los Angeles.

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\*Mr. Fleischman still dabbles in magic. He has sawed some of his best friends in half . . . and then put them back together!



# "My greatest treasure! Vanished without a trace!"

Mr. Otis Ambleside Keefe faced the Bloodhound Gang. "My rare flying pendulum clock is gone!" he exclaimed. "You must find the man who stole it!"

The Bloodhound Gang got right on the case, only to find some very strange clues: 100 pounds of salt, a steamed-up bathroom mirror, and footprints that led to a backyard wishing well.

Who was the thief? "I got a glimpse of him," said Mr. Keefe. "He had wild red hair and a chipped front tooth."

It was another tough case for the Bloodhound Gang to solve!

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Readers love the first Bloodhound Gang books, *The Case of Princess Tomorrow* and *The Case of the Cackling Ghost*!

"A neatly worked out plot is based on simple, believable gimmicks. . . . Fast reading, large print, and pleasing illustrations."  
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